

FAST FACTS FROM DR. KATZ

"To ensure access to high-quality, patient-centered, cost-effective health care to Los Angeles County residents through direct services at DHS facilities and through collaboration with community and university partners."



Mitchell H. Katz, M.D.
Director

January 18, 2012

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Irene Recendez "Nursing Champion" *Contributed by Michael Wilson*

LAC+USC Medical Center Chief Nursing Officer Irene Recendez, RN, was selected by the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors and the County Commission for Women as an award recipient at the 27th Annual "Women of the Year" luncheon to be held in March. For the past 26 years, the Commission has recognized women who have worked to bring about social and economic change, served as outstanding role models for women, worked on behalf of women's issues, and demonstrated outstanding performance to further advocate women's rights. Recendez will receive the Community-at-Large Award in the area of Health.

"I am truly humbled by this recognition and feel undeserving," said Recendez. "I share this award with all those who have been my role models and who taught me how to share the knowledge they gave me. I also share this recognition with all of my nursing colleagues who work tirelessly to serve our communities." "This is a fitting tribute for an exceptional professional who has committed her professional life to improving community health," said LAC+USC CEO Pete Delgado.

"On behalf of the LAC+USC community, I want to express our gratitude to Irene and our pride in her many accomplishments."

The annual event honors 12 outstanding women for their work in the fields of health care, philanthropy, business, and social service. Awardees are chosen based on commitment to enhancing the social and economic status of women in the County.



Director's Message

Lots of people all over our nation are talking about how to improve the patient experience. Books are written, curricula are developed, classes are given, and all for a good purpose. But I was struck by the simplicity of what one of our nurses, Cathlyn Jennings, currently of the EMS agency, wrote to me after the last Fast Facts. She previously worked as a nurse in the emergency department at Harbor, and she wrote: "I think everyone deserves the kind of health care you'd want for yourself or your family member." What a simple but powerful idea to see each patient as our mother or father, our child or our self.

For more inspiration, look below this column to see the miracles that can be accomplished at our facilities. How wonderful that a baby so small could thrive thanks to the care of countless nurses, doctors, pharmacists, and environmental services professionals. I am also very proud of our LAC+USC Chief Nursing Officer Irene Recendez, RN for having been named "Woman of the Year."

Check out our first Annual Report which can be found on the DHS webpage (<http://ladhs.org/wps/portal/>). It is full of great pictures and descriptions of the miracles that happen daily at DHS. There is a lot for us to be proud of.

On a personal level I am happy to report that what has seemed like the longest move between San Francisco and Los Angeles is finally over. Yesterday, we moved from the short term rental apartment that I have been in for the last 13 months to our permanent residence! No more short-term rental, no more storage locker; I am so happy to finally live in Los Angeles County.

-Mitch

"Miracle Baby" Melinda Star Delivered at LAC+USC Medical Center

Contributed by Michael Wilson

International media attention was generated at LAC+USC Medical Center when tiny Melinda Star Guido made her public debut from the hospital's Neonatal Intensive Care Unit. Melinda was born premature at 24 weeks on August 30th and weighted 9 1/2 ounces, less than a can of soda. Melinda may be small in stature, but she's a giant in the record books. According to a global registry that tracks births, Melinda is the third smallest baby ever born in the world and one of four tiny survivors born in 2011. Her parents say that despite her precarious condition, Melinda immediately showed the instincts of a survivor. "She was always fighting, always fighting for her life," said Melinda's parents, Haydee Ibarra and Yovani Guido.

22 year old Haydee Ibarra, who previously had a stillborn, suffered from high blood pressure during her pregnancy, which can be dangerous to both mother and fetus. She was transferred from a private hospital to LAC+USC, LA County's flagship hospital which excels at handling high-risk pregnancies. Complications necessitated that the baby be delivered prematurely and doctors knew that the baby would be fragile. "The first three or four days I was worried if this baby was going to make it," said Dr. Rangasamy Ramanathan, Chief of Neonatology at LAC+USC, who urged the family to take it minute by minute. Dr. Ramanathan said this birth could only happen at a tertiary care hospital like LAC+USC where physicians and the teams of caregivers have the skills and experience to manage complicated births. Experts aren't sure of the long term health consequences Melinda may face, but her progress has been steady, she is healthy and gaining weight, and was recently released home. Doctors say Melinda's development gives hope to other babies born prematurely. Melinda will be followed by the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit at LAC+USC over the next six years to check on her health and to maintain her continued quality of life.



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From R.N. to Ed.D.

Contributed by Katherine Cho



Dr. Tammy Blass is the Dean of the Education and Consulting Services (EDCOS) division of our College of Nursing and Allied Health and was hailed as a Los Angeles County Superstar while a member of the DHS Nursing Competency Committee. Tammy's nursing voyage began in 1991, when she graduated from the Los Angeles

County Medical Center School of Nursing and joined LAC+USC as a Staff Nurse in the Burn Unit. Tammy continued her nursing journey as a Clinical Instructor and Senior Nursing Instructor before becoming Dean of EDCOS in 2007. Although Tammy joined the County believing she would obtain a few years of experience before moving on, after 20 years Tammy is still here because she loves advocating and empowering nurses.

Tammy earned a Bachelor's degree in Psychology at UCLA, a Master's in Nursing at CSU, Los Angeles, and her doctorate in Educational Leadership at CSU, Long Beach in May, 2011. She was inducted into the Phi Kappa Phi Honor society and co-authored an article for Nursing Management on burn case management. Keenly aware of the key role nurses play in patient care and the need to continue one's education to develop professionally, Tammy is an inspiring example to students. She has worked tirelessly as an educator, role model, and mentor to nurses, patients, and the community. As her dissertation articulates, "A Nurse at Heart: The Journeys and Experiences of Nursing School Deans", she is a nurse to the core.

The Office of Nursing Affairs proudly acknowledges Tammy Blass for her passion and commitment. We congratulate her on all of her accomplishments and dedication to the Department of Health Services. Her continuous contributions to the nursing profession, patients, and community are truly appreciated.

Blue Shield Grant for L.A. Safety Net

Contributed by Michael Wilson

DHS has been awarded two grants totaling \$650,000 from the Blue Shield of California Foundation (BSCF) to improve access to specialty care through electronic referrals and expand coverage for uninsured patients through the state's Low Income Health Program, known locally as Healthy Way L.A. The charity said the grants are aimed at strengthening the state's health care safety net prior to full implementation of national health reform in 2014. "These grants will accelerate the work we have already begun to make our health system more inclusive and more responsive to the needs of our patients," said DHS Director Mitch Katz. "I am grateful to the Blue Shield Foundation for funding this important work in Los Angeles and to my exceptional leadership team that worked on these proposals." The first \$500,000 grant will fund development of an e-Consult referral system to improve care coordination and management between DHS and Community Partner-based primary care doctors and specialists. The outdated and largely paper-based Referral Processing System (RPS) system now used in DHS produces delays, duplications and overall poor coordination of care. With eConsult, primary care doctors share patient information and questions with specialists and the specialists provide "electronic consultations" back. The system is designed to better co-manage patient care and can reduce unnecessary specialist visits by as much as 60%. The grant supports BSCF efforts to bolster counties, community clinics, and other safety net providers in the use of electronic health records and other data to improve patient care and service integration. A second \$150,000 grant will fund Healthy Way L.A. coverage expansion to eligible uninsured adults. Healthy Way L.A. provides no-cost health coverage to adults who meet income requirements and are not eligible for other coverage programs like Medicaid or Healthy Families. More than 100,000 uninsured patients in the County have been enrolled in the program. The DHS grants are part of a total of \$6.85M in BSCF fourth quarter funding for various health care and coverage efforts in California.

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LAC Employees Participate in 2011 HomeWalk to End Homelessness



Department of Health Services employees and their families hit the streets of downtown this month with thousands of other Angelenos to support the United Way's efforts to end homelessness in the annual 5K HomeWalk around

Exposition Park. Participants included numerous elected officials, celebrities and athletes. Lakers' star Kobe Bryant is a spokesperson for the campaign and gave a pep talk to the crowd to kick-off the walk.

An estimated 50,000 people are homeless in Los Angeles County, where double digit unemployment rates persist. Funds raised through the HomeWalk support access to permanent affordable housing with essential services like health care, job training, and child care for homeless families and individuals.

"Permanent housing has proven to help break the cycle for the chronically homeless, who often battle substance abuse and mental health issues," said Scott Milbourn, the DHS HomeWalk team captain. "When affordable housing is combined with supportive services, health outcomes improve and utilization of emergency rooms decreases."

The HomeWalk has raised over \$1.7 million in the past four years and funded organizations that have housed 9,000 people. All proceeds go directly back to the community, supporting organizations that move homeless veterans and chronically homeless people into permanent supportive housing.

The model has proven highly successful in other cities such as New York and Denver. In Los Angeles County, the model has shown significant cost savings to tax-payers and an 85% success rate at keeping people off the streets.



Team Captain Scott with the Maganas